CLAIMS

1.   A method for instant messaging comprising:

enabling a thin client to employ a presence server for initiating a communications channel between at least first and second instant messaging users; and

conducting instant messaging along said communications channel between said instant messaging users.

2.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 1 and wherein said presence server is employed to simplify client-side connection negotiations to initiate said communications channel.

3.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 1 and also comprising employing an instant messaging session object to enable non-persistent clients to maintain a session along said communications channel.

4.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 2 and also comprising employing an instant messaging session object to enable non-persistent clients to maintain a session along said communications channel.

5.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 1 and wherein said enabling includes redirecting at least one client to at least one previously opened session on at least one presence server.

6.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 3 and wherein said enabling includes redirecting at least one client to at least one previously opened session on at least one presence server.

7.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 4 and wherein said enabling includes redirecting at least one client to at least one previously opened session on at least one presence server.

8.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 1 and wherein said

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conducting employs a first communication protocol between said first user and said presence server and employs a second communication protocol, different from said first communication protocol, between said presence server and said second user.

9.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 3 and wherein said conducting employs a first communication protocol between said first user and said presence server and employs a second communication protocol, different from said first communication protocol, between said presence server and said second user.

10.   A method for instant messaging according to claim 4 and wherein said conducting employs a first communication protocol between said first user and said presence server and employs a second communication protocol, different from said first communication protocol, between said presence server and said second user.

11.   A system for instant messaging comprising:
        at least first and second communication devices; and
        a presence server operative to initiate a communications channel between at least first and second instant messaging users via said at least first and second communication devices, at least one of which employs a thin client.

12.   A system for instant messaging according to claim 11 and wherein said presence server is operative to simplify client-side connection negotiations to initiate said communications channel.

13.   A system for instant messaging according to claim 12 and wherein said presence server includes an instant messaging session object operative to enable non-persistent clients to maintain a session along said communications channel.

14.   A system for instant messaging according to claim 13 and wherein said presence server includes an instant messaging session object operative to enable non-persistent clients to maintain a session along said communications channel.

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15.   A system for instant messaging according to claim 11 and also comprising first and second communication protocols enabling communication between said presence server and said first and second communication devices.

16.   A system for instant messaging according to claim 13 and also comprising first and second communication protocols enabling communication between said presence server and said first and second communication devices.

17.   A system for instant messaging according to claim 15 and wherein said first communication protocol supports redirecting at least one client to at least one previously opened session on at least one presence server.

18.   A system for instant messaging according to claim 16 and wherein said first communication protocol supports redirecting at least one client to at least one previously opened session on at least one presence server.

19,   A system according to claim 15 and wherein said first and second communication protocols are different from each other.

20.   A system according to claim 16 and wherein said first and second communication protocols are different from each other.

21.   A system according to claim 11 and wherein said communication devices includes a thin client selected from the group consisting of a WAP client, a WML client, an HTML client or an HDML client.

22.   A system according to claim 11 and wherein said presence server includes at least one session object storing session information.

23.   A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an audio file server associated with said presence server.

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24.   A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an IVR operative to interface between a telephone and said presence server.

25.   A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an account information server for validating user access to the presence server.

26.   A system according to claim 24 and wherein said presence server includes a client interface interfacing with said IVR.

27.   A system according to claim 24 and wherein said presence server includes a message cache.

28.   A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an HTTP/WAP server through which a web user may be connected to said presence server.

29.   A system according to claim 11 and also comprising an external server enabling communication between said presence server and an instant messaging service.